

## **2000 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes Enterprise Community (A.S.T.E.C)**

The A.S.T.E.C. endured a challenging and rewarding year. From reorganization of the staff, Board and organic documents to successfully leveraging millions in funding for Clean Water, business development and education.

Early in 2000 the Enterprise Community found itself hindered by a divided board and communication had broken down with the lead and fiscal agent. The A.S.T.E.C. Fort Peck Tribes and the USDA/RD worked through these "growing pains". An expedient and successful transition allowed the Enterprise Community to get back on task. The new staff focused on opening lines of communication and interaction with the local, state and national partners. The BOD was re-advertised to the community to increase the participation and reconfirm existing commitments to work collectively on carrying out the strategic plan. Consistent, timely and focused meetings were held every two weeks. A strategic planning session helped with a check of current progress and future priorities of the benchmarks. The organization finished the year with a renewed focus and commitment to carry out its mission to provide economic and social development opportunities for our community.

The A.S.T.E.C. has developed partnership with the Fort Peck Tribes. Activities leveraged with the EC have involved a "Nation Building" training session with consultants from the Harvard School of Business. The one and half day workshop was based on fundamental issues of governance, including the construction of governmental institutions and the role of public leaders in effectively creating and promoting economic policy for self-determined reservation development. The Tribal Executive also looked at the success of "Ho-Chunk Inc.", a holding company of the Nebraska Winnebago Tribe. The Fort Peck Tribes have adopted a similar commercial code that will ensure fair and just business practices. It would allow outside and existing businesses (tribal/non-tribal) "to provide for the maintenance of law and order and the administration of justice". Fort Peck Inc. will be a stand alone economic development corporation that will enlist tribal and non-tribal "professionals" that will make informed and educated decisions in regards to the potential profitability and feasibility of business ventures.

The staff of the EC has been fortunate enough to partner with the Tribal Business Information Center of the Fort Peck Community College to share office space and computer equipment. The TBIC is an SBA sponsored program that provides the center with the latest in software, hardware and an extensive resource library. The Enterprise and Community Business center provide clients access to high speed Internet, a video and manual library of economic and social development programs and copying/scanning capabilities. The TBIC center has joined efforts in making their Micro-loan available to EC clients that qualify. The TBIC and EC have partnered in administering the Marketing Coalition program for Tribal Enterprises. This \$250,000.00 HUD program provides Tribal Enterprises with the Technical and Financial assistance to effectively recruit, retain and expand their businesses. The Business Center and Enterprise Community actively collaborate on a number of Entrepreneurial Assistance programs including the Johnson Scholarship Awards that provide financial aid for business interns and continued education students.

Besides the strengths in partnerships and their leveraged capabilities, the year 2000 has seen the EC support a number of high impact community based projects.

Benchmark #22 – Promote full utilization of tribal water rights to develop a Municipal and Rural Water Supply System. This benchmark was targeted for higher quality of life was to promote full utilization of

tribal water rights in developing a Municipal and Rural Water Supply. It was one of President Clinton's last administrative actions to sign into law the funding appropriations for the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water Systems Project. The Enterprise Community has financially supported the administrative efforts of Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority and Ft. Peck Tribes Water Resource Department to collaborate on building an intake facility on the Missouri River that would be designed to deliver up to 13 million gallons of water per day, its treatment process would meet state and federal drinking water standards, and would pump through 3,200 miles of pipeline via 20 pump stations. The fresh water would be delivered to a designated population of 30,000 residents for municipal, rural, industrial, commercial and livestock purposes in an 8,000 sq. mile area of Northeast Montana. When finished, cost of this project will exceed \$200 Million dollars.

To address the potential of value added crops and food processing operations for Northeastern Montana the Enterprise Community supported the ongoing development of the North Spole Irrigation Project. This project is a collaborative effort with the State, Dept. of Agriculture (NRCS, Culbertson Office) BIA, Ft. Peck Tribes and Enterprise Community to support the services of an irrigation development specialist. Paul Finnicum is the specialist who will be working on developing irrigation for value added-crops, which could attract food-processing businesses to the area. We have completed a social and economic impact study which quantifies the impact of growing high value crops. In partnership with the state of Montana the Fort Peck Tribes are pursuing Pick Sloan Power 2/10th of a Cent vs. 12 ½ cents per Kilowatt Hour = \$500,000 per year operation costs savings for North of Spole Irrigation Project. Consultant Tom Weaver will be executing the project. Future funding will be pursued with the State and Bureau of Reclamation on this important initiative.

Supporting the benchmarks for quality education has reaped a successful return for the community's K-12 and higher learning institutions. Among the awards received were the 21st Century Learning Grant, Brockton Bilingual Program, Teachers and Personnel Grants, the Gear-up Program, Immaculate Conception Religious Education Program and the Fort Peck Community College Women's Education Equity Act Program. These multi-year programs have the financial backing that total into the millions. The essence of these programs is to prep students for college, train teachers to gain their Class 7 Language Certificate in Assiniboine & Sioux Language and to promote equity in education for women.

Local Industries have been a major benefactor and success story for the Enterprise Community. Assiniboine & Sioux Industries is a metal manufacturing plant and at one time was the largest manufacturer in the state of Montana. With the cutbacks in the orders from the Department of Departments for the specialized medical chests and camouflage netting produced at A&S came mass layoffs. In the recent year A&S has restructured their debt and internal operations with the help of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Local Lenders, the Fort Peck Tribes and the Enterprise Community. In partnership with the Enterprise Community, USDA/RD and the EDA the Manufacturer was able to purchase state of the art management software that would allow its operation to compete in the commercial market. The software tracks quality, engineering, finance and productivity. Along with the software project the Enterprise Community also supported a grant that was funded by the EDA for a new waste water system that provides a treatment system that would resolve hazardous flow problems.

In addition to the success of our community is the assistance provided to our Airports. The rural location of Fort Peck makes it essential that we upgrade and expand existing facilities to maintain and attract air traffic commerce. The Enterprise Community leveraged funding for maintenance of existing and acquisition of land for building bigger airports.

The year was filled with many more successes as well as adversities that made it imperative the community worked together to accomplish the two year benchmarks of the Enterprise Community. Two-thousand and one is upon us and we have proved that the EC can become a major force in the

development of our 2009 vision to become an attractive, prosperous homeland, characterized by economic and social health.